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ABSTRACT

An examination of the language-related educational policies of South Asia, and particularly of India, finds that language policies among colonial administrators and the native elite for over a century has left a deep imprint on contemporary language ideologies of different nations. The discussion begins with a look at the Indian dual education system before the consolidation of British rule on the subcontinent at the beginning of the nineteenth century, with instruction given in Sanskrit and Arabic-Persian. The rival British educational system later eclipsed the traditional systems, and as it evolved, it effectively ignored all mediums of instruction except English. The struggle for Indian independence brought with it substantial conflict over the British education system, and the issue of language of instruction became politicized. Patterns of native language use and language policy in India and other South Asian areas are described, and the problems facing many multilingual developing nations as a result of current language usage and strategies are discussed briefly. Contains 47 references. (MSE)

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Language Ideology and Language Development

L.M. Khubchandani

I: An Appraisal of Indian Education Policy

The roots of intense language controversies in South Asia can be found in the 'schizophrenic' handling of education by the British rulers. Various 'native' pressure groups championing the cause of different languages were mobilized during the nineteenth century largely due to the ruler's policies of arbitrarily distributing favours or prejudices through language concessions or constraints (awarding or withdrawing recognition to one or another vernacular or writing system), to bring some order into the 'chaotic' diversity, or at times to serve imperial interests. Various instant, but often vacillating, decisions with regard to

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language education on the part of British rulers played a vital role in shaking the traditional fluid modes of language loyalty in South Asia. The great debate about language policies among colonial administrators and the 'native' élite for over a century has left a deep imprint on contemporary language ideologies of different nations on the subcontinent (Das Gupta 1970; Khubchandani 1971, 1973c).

II: Education System Before the British

Language in formal communication gets conditioned by the administrative and educational systems prevailing in a society. Before the consolidation of British rule on the Indian subcontinent at the turn of the nineteenth century, there were two competing systems of education: the *pathshala* (school) and *ashram* (residential school) system of the Brahmins; and *maktab* (primary school) and *madrasah* (college) system of the Muslims.

As in medieval Europe, where the language of education was Latin (the language of sacred literature), in India, until the nineteenth century, the language of education was Sanskrit for the Hindus and Arabic-Persian for the Muslims. Under Muslim rule, certain Hindu élites made themselves conversant with both systems of education. Significant characteristics of the traditional educational set-up in India can be described as follows:

1 Education was regarded as an extension of 'primary' socialization imbibed through the immediate environments of family, caste, creed, and tradition, providing a superstructure to the society in which an individual operates. It emphasized the personal 'disciple' relationship between pupil and teacher. It was restricted to members of the classes that provided the priesthood, the rulers, and the merchants. Two patterns, shaped by vocational relevance, were prominently recognized in the education system: (*a*) ORDINARY TRADITION representing the 'practical' education provided to the administrators and merchants to cope with the day-to-day needs of society (such as, for use in lower courts, for maintaining accounts) through locally dominant vernaculars; and (*b*) ADVANCED TRADITION representing the 'elegant' education provided to the élite (priests, ruling class, and administrators) by reading of scriptures and historical texts, through Sanskrit or Arabic-Persian.

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2 The education system was oriented towards preserving segmental identities in the society through language hierarchy by catering to the needs of the 'ordinary' and 'advanced' traditions. A built-in hierarchical structuring of linguistic skills in the society promoted a chain of mutually intelligible speech varieties—from local dialects to sub-regional dialects, to a super-regional network of dialects of languages, and 'highbrow' styles—in different diglossic situations.[1] The educational set-up provided a measure of fluidity in the use of language according to considerations of context and purpose, which is a characteristic strength of a pluralistic society.[2] Sanskrit and Arabic-Persian-speaking élites acted as LIAISON between the rulers and the masses. To some extent, Hindustani in the north, Tamil in the south, Bengali in the east also served this purpose for some of the princely states, and catered to the needs of 'ordinary' tradition.

3 Many regional systems of writing, varying according to locality and professional group, for the same language were in use. Besides, the regional varieties of Devanagari and the NASKHI and NASTALIK characters of the Perso-Arabic script, there were many variants of MAHAJANI writing prevalent among merchants. The scholarships, though limited to the privileged few, had to be acquainted with a variety of writing systems, distinguished according to locality, social group, and domain of use.[3] Sanskrit of the 'advanced' tradition was in vogue in more than one writing system. Apart from the Devanagari writing system, Sanskrit was written in Grantha, Malayalam, Telugu characters in the south; in Bhoti script in Tibet; in Sharada script in Kashmir; in Bengali, Maithili variations of Nagari writing in the east; and other regional variations of Devanagari script in different areas.

III: Language in Colonial Education

The rival British educational system known as schools soon eclipsed the traditional *pathshala* and *maktab* education systems in most parts of British India, though many princely states continued their patronage to traditional educational institutions. The colonial education policy for over one-and-a-half centuries changed through different phases depending on the political expediency of the times.

British administrators could not resolve the three basic issues of education : the content, the spread, and the medium (Dakin 1968:

5-12). Macaulay, in his famous Minute of 1835, took a hard line concerning the triple question, which echoed in the education programmes of the British throughout their stay on the subcontinent. He recommended a policy of imparting Western knowledge through a Western tongue (English) and then only to a minority.

> It is impossible for us with our limited means to attempt to educate the body of the people. We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern—a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population (Sharp 1920: 116).[4]

Governor-General Bentinck (1835), concurring with the sentiments of Macaulay, made it explicit that 'the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India; and that all the funds appropriated for the purpose of education would be best employed on English education alone' (Sharp 1920: 130-31).[5] The Hardinge Proclamation of 1844 further divorced the objectives of education from the environment by spelling out preferential treatment in recruitment for service in public offices 'to those who were educated in English schools' (India 1953: 8). With the accruing privileges of economic status and social stratification, the Hindu and Muslim élites were lured to accept English as their liaison language, abandoning the use of Sanskrit or Persian for such purposes.[6]

In 1854 the British rulers modified their policy by accepting the responsibility for the education of the whole population, as recommended in Wood's Despatch (Richey 1922: 367-92). It suggested the use of the vernacular medium 'to teach the far larger class who are ignorant of, or imperfectly acquainted with, English'. But the introduction of vernacular education was extremely slow, as in actual implementation when assigning resources, the priority continued to be given to English secondary schools in cities and towns to the neglect of the rural vernacular schools. Though the rulers often proclaimed their policy of secular and vernacular education, individual administrators at

the district level were often enthusiastic in lending direct or indirect support to promoting English education under missionary patronage.[7]

With the establishment of Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras Universities in 1857, primary and secondary education became merely a step to fulfill the requirements of university pursuits. These universities adopted English as the exclusive medium of instruction, and the study of oriental learning as well as of the modern Indian languages was totally neglected. A shift in the rulers' policy to run their administration at the lower level in the vernacular required the setting up of the committees to evolve a single script and establishing a single standard variety for Indian languages, for use in formal communication. The Education Commission in 1902 recommended mother tongue as the proper medium of instruction for all classes up to the higher secondary level.

In actual terms, the British recognized three types of education

1. English medium, in urban centres for the education of the élite, right from the primary stage.
2. Two-tier medium, vernacular medium for primary education, and English medium for advanced education in towns.
3. Vernacular medium, in rural areas for primary education.

Thus, by the turn of the twentieth century, 'although the official policy was that of the Despatch of 1854, it was Macaulay's policy of selective higher education in English that had achieved comparatively the greater success', under the plea of devoting the inadequate financial resources to improving the quality of education (Dakin 1968: 8).

During the long struggle for Indian independence, the selective education structure was vehemently criticized by the leaders of the Indian National Congress. Gokhale and other intellectuals, influenced by the Western literature of the eighteenth century Enlightenment, saw the need for universal elementary education,[8] and also put forward pleas for the use of mother tongue in administration. But the Hartog Report (1929) wanted 'a drastic re-organization of the elementary system [to] precede any wide application of compulsion'.

In 1938 Mahatma Gandhi proposed a scheme for Basic Education which was practically the antithesis of Macaulay's policy concerning the questions of content, spread, and medium. It attempted to resolve the conflict between quality and quantity in education, by proposing to bring it into closer touch with the child's environment and to extend it throughout rural areas without increasing the cost by integrating it to

the rural handicrafts. Tagore also rejected both the manner and the content of English education.

As is evident from this review, the British policies made a significant impact on the concept of education itself and also on the role of language in education for plural societies of the subcontinent.

1 Contrary to the 'modern' values attributed to Humanism, the country was almost confronted with a deliberate policy of selective higher education to train an élite class to mediate between the technologically superior 'caste' or class. The English language, which was largely responsible for injecting 'modern' thought into Oriental life, took over the dominant position hitherto enjoyed by 'classical' Sanskrit and Persian.

The British system of education in India thus perpetuated the DICHOTOMY of the privileged language (English) versus vernaculars, whereas accelerating modernization processes during the periods of Renaissance and Enlightenment in Europe had resurrected modern European languages from the dominance of classical languages—Latin and Greek (Khubchandani 1973 b).

2 The Western Enlightenment imbibed through English contact radically changed the concept of education for the Indian élite. The 'modern' conviction of the supremacy of mother tongue brought demands from the language élites for the use of Indian vernaculars for formal communication (i.e., administration, academic achievement, etc.). Dayanand Saraswati in the latter part of the nineteenth century followed by Tagore (1906) and Gandhi (1916) were among the leading champions of the struggle for vernacularization in education. These trends, to a certain extent, shook the dichotomous structure of the liaison between the élites and the masses which existed in the medieval period and was also perpetuated by the English rulers.

3 Diversification of language use prevailing in the traditional educational set-up of South Asia was regarded by the colonial rulers as a 'handicap'. Many British administrators responded with a sense of bafflement to relatively fluid segmentation patterns in language behaviour of the Indian society, and often expressed their annoyance concerning 'the want of precision of the people in identifying their language'.[7] Axiomatically correlating their own values of social homogenization the rulers laid great emphasis on clear-cut categorization and monistic solutions concerning languages and scripts. Many administrators engaged themselves in standardizing a single writing system, a single

standard grammar, and a single style for every domain of use, in the name of bringing order into a 'chaotic' situation.[10]

4 Indian languages have traditionally been characterized by 'loan proneness' from the classical as well as spoken languages. Bilingual contacts with English have been greatly instrumental in cultivating various styles of expression in Indian languages to cater for the needs of modern society. The Anglicization tendency in many languages is evident in the 'highbrow' spoken styles among urban speech communities which are markedly different from the 'highbrow' written styles (Khubchandani 1968, 1969c). The introduction of the printing press also played a significant role in developing Indian prose through the publication of reference works, grammars, dictionaries, encyclopedias, and translations of creative literature and works of knowledge from different European languages.

IV: Mother Tongue Medium

The politicization of the language issue in India during the struggle for independence dominated the medium controversy, pushing into the background the ideological issues concerning the content of education. The demand for vernacularization by the 'native' élite was associated with the cultural and national resurgence, and eventually with the growth of democracy promoting equality of opportunity through education (Tagore 1906; Gandhi 1916). All the maladies of 'ineffective' education—lack of responsiveness, imitative goals, poverty of original thinking, prevalence of parrot learning—and other imbalances in the traditional societies which generated from the alien system were romantically attributed to the alien (i.e., English) medium.

One of the most intricate characteristics in the medium debate of many developing nations has been the uncritical acceptance of Western theories of education of the early twentieth century, mostly derived from the experiences of tackling the issues of relatively more homogenized societies, and also at a time when the thrust of technology was less pervasive than in present times. Many modern education experts regard it as axiomatic that the best medium for teaching a child is his mother tongue. Several psychological, educational, sociopolitical, and historical arguments have been advanced in support of this contention. In this vein, a UNESCO report (1953: 11) recommended: 'Psychologically, it [mother tongue] is the system of meaningful signs that in his mind

works automatically for expression and understanding. Sociologically, it is a means of identification among the members of the community to which he belongs. Educationally, he learns more quickly through it than through an unfamiliar linguistic medium'.

The Indian Secondary Education Commission (GOI 1953) also endorsed this view: 'Learning through the mother tongue is the most potent and comprehensive medium for the expression of the student's entire personality'. In the thrust for canvassing mother tongue medium for education, Indian experts did not fully comprehend the plural character of Indian society at large, where a child's earliest firsthand experiences of life do not necessarily show semblance with the formal 'school version' of his mother tongue. In societies where speech habits are not consistently identified with a particular language label, esteem for a particular ideal of speech or many sociopolitical beliefs may lead individuals to identify with a prestigious major language group which need not necessarily be one's native speech.

The vast Hindi–Urdu–Punjabi (HUP) region, comprising 46 per cent of the country's total population, represents a typical case where identificational considerations of communication override the linguistic characteristics, and the Hindi, Urdu, and Punjabi language loyalties in the thrust for rival claims of solidarity incorporate many vernaculars of the region—Pahari, Lahnda, Rajasthani, Maithili, Bhojpuri, Awadhi, Chhatisgarhi—in their overall speech matrices. Among the mother tongue claimants of Hindi in the region, one prominent category is of those monolinguals (mostly rural) who, though speaking vernaculars altogether different from Hindi, claim 'Hindi' as their mother tongue, as they regard themselves as part of the great 'Hindi tradition'. Their speech, in the strict formal sense, will be classified as a distinct language different from the so-called Hindi (i.e., Khariboli) as understood by structuralists, academicians, and other custodians of language standardization (Khubchandani 1972; 1974a). Many socio-political and psychological generalizations about the supremacy of mother tongue made during the independence movement have, to a great extent, obscured the picture. The issues concerning the facility of expression in the mother tongue have been highlighted in rather simplistic terms, by juxtaposing mother tongue against the foreign language (English). In this regard, it is taken for granted that a foreign medium hampers the growth of creativity and talents.[11] In this conflict anti-Hindi lobbies regard even Hindi, along with English, as a foreign language. The supporters of mother tongue ideology have not cared to

define the bounds of mother tongue: nor has adequate attention been paid to accounting for the diverse patterns of language hierarchy prevailing in multilingual plural societies. One notices several inhibitions among educationists concerning the problems of the wide gap between the hinterland varieties and the 'elegant' urban-based standard languages being imposed as school mother tongue.[12] In several elementary education curricula one often notices an overemphasis on careful drilling in the 'correct' forms of standard regional speech and pronunciation. Thus the acquisition of literacy in languages like Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Marathi, Tamil becomes more like learning a 'second' language.

So far there does not seem to be much realization of the difficulties which the rural population face due to the unintelligibility of the instant 'highbrow' standards projected in mother tongue textbooks. This lack of recognition of the problem results in the wastage and stagnation in literacy programmes. Most standardization devices in Indian languages today serve only to extend the 'tradition-inspired' value system of small élites over all domains in the entire speech community. The pleas of language leaders for developing puristic 'academic', 'official' standards of language—along the lines of the nineteenth century Latinized English, and the Sanskritized or Perso-Arabized 'highbrow' literary styles of Indian languages—put a heavy strain on the users of language and contradict in themselves the concerns for the facility of expression of students through mother tongue education. The catholicity about the élite-acceptable diction of one's own speech often makes native speakers 'alien' and 'handicapped' in their own surroundings, unable to cope even with simple communication needs because of the new values and norms proclaimed for their speech behaviour, especially in the domains of public communication (administration, education, mass media, etc.).

In multilingual and multidialectal societies there are speech groups which have virtual native control over more than one language or dialect. One sees an inevitable measure of fluidity in certain regions in India and Pakistan and among smaller groups throughout the subcontinent. In such situations one's total repertoire is influenced by more than one normative system, and language labels are not rigidly identified with fixed 'stereotypes'. A speech group associates the diversity of speech (styles, registers, dialects, languages, etc.), around it with different values in social interaction. In heterogeneous plural environments, a child acquires language from everyday life situations

where speech behaviour is guided by various implicit pressures based on close-group, regional, supra-regional, outgroup, urban, and pan-Indian identities. A large gap between the speech patterns of typical illiterate communities and the socialization values promoted through school education is evident from the summaries of two cases (Khubchandani 1973d; 1974b) (see Table 1).

V: Language Identity in Plural Society

In linguistic and educational jargon, the terms 'mother tongue' and 'native speech' are often used indistinguishably, which leads to some indeterminacy when applied in different contexts. The term native speech can be distinguished as 'the first speech acquired in infancy, through which a child gets socialized.' It claims some bearing on 'intuitive' competence, and potentially it can be individually identifiable. The term 'mother tongue' is mainly 'categorized by one's allegiance to a particular tradition, and it is societally identifiable'. In the ingroup/outgroup dichotomy, a speech variety which members of a group (or, in extreme cases, even an individual) regard as their 'own' is accepted as their mother tongue. Though the actual speech of an individual is marked by various diverse and heterogeneous characteristics revealing stratificational demands of the context, people perceive their own and other's speech in categorical terms as discrete language A or language B, as if it were uniform and homogeneous. This paradox of 'heterogeneous' performance and 'homogenized' perception (i.e., categorization) is one of the characteristic features of speech behaviour (Khubchandani 1974a).

In various regions in South Asia different socialization processes identify the characteristics of a speech stratum—local speech, sub-regional, supra-regional varieties, lingua franca, highbrow dictions—associating them with a variety of interactions on the cline

close ingroup -> wider ingroup -> intergroup -> mobility
mass communication -> urban contract -> formal (model for prestige)

In such diversified speech areas, education programmes need to be geared to facilitate the scope of communication with the prevailing socialization values in a community extending from one's native speech

TABLE 1

(A) SPEECH BEHAVIOUR AND LANGUAGE EDUCATION

RURAL MARATHI COMMUNITY AROUD NAGPUR

Typical verbal repertoire		*Language values promoted through education*	
Speech varieties	Communication situations	Languages taught	School values
Nagpuri Marathi	close ingroup	—	denied prestige, and used minimally as substandard varieties
Supra-dialectal Marathi	wider ingroup	—	
Standard Marathi	ingroup mass communication	Marathi	promoted through 'autonomy' values in all situations
Neighbouring varieties of Marathi	optional familiarity through mobility	—	regarded as non-prestigious and their use not promoted
Nagpuri Hindustani	intergroup	—	its use signifies non-prestigious upbringing
Standard Hindi/Urdu	intergroup mass communication	Hindi	learnt as an 'excercise' for eventual use after the school career (not related to immediate use)
Regional English usage (a few phrases)	optional modernistic acquaintance	English	
Sanskrit or Arabic (a few phrases)	optional ritualistic acquaintance	Sanskrit, Arabic/ Persian	learnt as optional classical languages for religious and literary scholarship

Use of regional and hybrid varieties (patios, pidgins creoles, etc.) is regarded as a sign of inferior socialization

(B) RURAL SANTALI COMMUNITY IN BIHAR

Local Santali	close ingroup	—	denied prestige, and used minimally as substandard
Supra-dialectal Santali	wider ingroup	—	
—	—	Santali (standard set by language-élite)	medium for primary education
Other tribal languages (Munda, Ho, etc.)	optional familiarity through mobility	—	regarded as non-prestigious, and their use not promoted

Table Contd.

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Sadri(Sadan)-a hybrid Bihari language	tribal intergroup	—	its use signifies a non-prestigious upbringing
Bihari languages (Maithili, Magahi, etc.), Regional Bengali or Oriya	non-tribal intergroup	—	regarded as non-prestigious, and their use not promoted
Regional Hindustani	urban contact	—	its use signifies a non-prestigious upbringing
Standard Hindi/Urdu; standard Bengali or Oriya	mass communication	Hindi	medium for further education
Regional English Usage (a few phrases	optional modernistic acquaintance	English	learnt as an 'excercise' for eventual use after the school career (not related to immediate use)
—	—	Sanskrit	learnt as an optional classical language for religious and literary scholarship
		Grassroots 'folk' multilingualism is denied prestige, and the use of regional and hybrid varieties discouraged in formal communication	

to 'associate native' speech, second language, and subsequently to totally unfamiliar language.

Many speakers of the north-central HUP region of India, who are not native speakers of Hindi or Urdu in the strict linguistic sense but claim Hindi or Urdu as their mother tongue in the census returns, have, by and large, native-like command over Hindi or Urdu, and it is virtually an 'associate native' speech to them. They are also called 'adherent' speakers, distinguishing them from 'native' and 'foreign' speakers (Kelkar 1968). For such people Hindi or Urdu represents a particular tradition. Most of the speakers in the region, particularly those in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Bihar, are quite unaware of their bilingual or multilingual behaviour (Khubchandani 1972). For them switching of linguistic codes from native speech to Hindi/Urdu is

similar to the switching of styles (such as, informal/formal) in a monolingual situation. Kloss (1967) calls such vernaculars 'near dialectized' languages : 'Functionally as well as psychologically they are accepted by their speakers as dialect-like tools of oral communication (plus, at best, of unassuming poetry).'

One notices a superimposed homogeneity in communication patterns on the cline of urbanization in the entire Hindi–Urdu–Punjabi region divided between India and Pakistan. The speech behaviour of these people represents a pattern of the 'divided joint family', where different vernaculars—Punjabi, Lahnda, Pahari, several languages belonging to Rajasthani and Bihari groups—enjoy hierarchical positions under a single umbrella, but once again are split in diametrically opposite camps, namely Hindi and Urdu (in some regions the split between Hindi and Punjabi is also more ideological than linguistic).

In the course of history, language boundaries get stabilized not so much on account of the barriers of intelligibility between two speech varieties, as on the considerations of identity and value systems among the speakers of those varieties. The 'highbrow' registers of Hindi and Urdu are sharply marked by the polarization in the patterns of borrowing, whereas at the 'lowbrow' level, distinction between the two is not regarded as so significant. Identification through a particular language label is very much a matter of social awareness on the part of an individual. 'It is a categorically determined institutional attribute, not necessarily having exact parallel with structural characteristics in one's speech matrix' (Khubchandani 1976). In multilingual societies the ideal claim and the real function of a language might be at variance.[13]

During the initial post-colonial period, different expert bodies on education such as the Central Advisory Board of Education (1948), University Education Commission (1949), and Official Language Commission (1956) gave greater weight to the broad interpretation of mother tongue, i.e., regarding all minority languages not having any written tradition as 'dialects' of the dominant language in the region, by which there was implicit denial of equal rights to linguistic minorities on the ground of practicability.[14] Many protagonists of major languages pointed out the illogicality of literacy in languages that have no literature.[15] In a critical appraisal of the role of mother tongue in education, a study conducted at the National Council for Education Research and Training (NCERT) highlights wide disparities in the sociocultural traditions of states and consequently notes that languages

differ in their stages of development. It points out that education through the minority languages which hold a subordinate position in society and are relatively less cultivated, is likely to produce uneven levels of achievements, and thus will create unequal opportunities for higher education and employment for minority communities (Goel and Saini 1972).

But during the past three decades, the linguistic minorities have shown greater vigilance in safeguarding their rights for mother tongue education, and have practically succeeded in getting the authorities to accept the narrow interpretation of mother tongue, by which the home language of each child, 'the language spoken from the cradle', is accepted as mother tongue (1951 Census of India, 1954:1). Most of the state governments now show a sense of tolerance to the heterogeneity of education media in their multilingual pockets. The safeguards of mother tongue education at the primary school stage for linguistic minorities were spelled out in the Three Language Formula in 1956.[7] Some concessions were even made for the continuance of secondary education through tribal language media wherever possible. But the pace of implementation has been rather slow. No doubt, the initial reluctance in accepting the narrow definition of mother tongue is now overcome but several objections are still raised for its full implementation and many states wait for the extinction of minority languages on their own.

VI: Assumptions of Language Development

The simplistic projection of mother tongue education as a means of establishing equality of opportunity for individual self-advancement has led to discarding the principle of language hierarchy in education. It has given way to the demands of language autonomy, i.e., 'the promotion of full fledged or autonomous status for a language as an exclusive vehicle for full expression in different fields of knowledge and in all walks of life' (Khubchandani 1973c; 1974b). It is taken for granted that the 'highbrow' values of speech communication—uniformity, precision, elegance, purity of form, allegiance to literary tradition, elaboration of language through coinage of technical terms—are essential paths for developing a language (Khubchandani 1975a, 1975b).

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So pervasive in our time is the distinction between developed and underdeveloped (euphemistically called developing) stages of economies, societies and even cultures, that many language experts are led to employ the same dichotomy for languages too (Neustupny 1974). Many language-elites, guided by post-Renaissance European trends—such as creation of new standard languages, assimilation of neighbouring dialects and unwritten languages of minorities—regard such homogenization processes as inevitable in the contemporary modernization stages of Asia and Africa as well. In their thrust for 'modernity', they either seek to get their speech recognized as a developed 'absolute' language or abandon the 'handicapped' speech altogether in favour of the one believed to be the 'privileged' variety.

In this dichotomous process, many less favourably placed speech varieties—which may be dialects, vernaculars, minority languages or may have non-élite styles—stand the danger of becoming totally extinct.[17] As the age-old, harmonious hierarchic patterning of different speech varieties (or languages) in one's verbal repertoire gets disturbed, it gives birth to disharmony among different speech groups (such as, issues of language privileges in education, state boundary disputes over language identity in India). The dichotomous approach in 'language development', in a way, depicts the futile race of catching up with the Joneses, as is evident from a more than century-old programme of 'refining the vernacular dialects' (expounded in the 'Macaulay's Minutes', 1835), and also the British rulers' targets of vernacular development in response to the demand for a Vernacular University in 1867.[18] The British rulers rejected the vernacular medium for higher education on the plea that 'the vernaculars of the country do not as yet afford the materials for conveying instruction of the comparatively high order' (Document 7, Naik 1963: 29-32). As such, in this unending chase of the mirage, by the time the vernaculars struggle their way to acquiring the credibility of 'developed' languages, the latter will have moved higher with additional honours, such as usability with computers, or space satellities and so on. The issue of 'language development' merits close scrutiny to consider the chances of success of the present aspirations of language-élites in newly-independent nations, shaped in the 'language autonomy' mold, to meet the needs of their heterogeneous pluralistic communities. The main problems confronting many developing nations as a result of present language strategies are as follows:

1 The harmonious mutual accommodation of heterogeneous speech communities has given way to a tense and rigid insistence on different normative systems and a pervasive competition for language privileges in different domains and regions. Various developmental actions aimed at transforming the convergent, 'situation-bound' speech behaviours into divergent, pseudo-autonomous, puristic 'tradition-inspired' languages—and associated societies—are leading these nations into serious problems in relation to national integration. The 'élitistic' education system does not take account of the complexity of dialects in flux at the folk level, and links the development of language with the clear-cut demarcation of language use. Thus a continuum of language hierarchy gets compartmentalized, and the diglossic complementation of different languages signifying different communicative tasks does not receive enthusiastic support from the languages experts.

2 Theoretically, the arguments for mother tongue supremacy based on 'elegant' urban standards hold very little substance as far as the facility of expression is concerned. The sudden imposition of a standard variety by a language-élite on a community creates serious communication gaps (Pandit 1972). Such an 'instant standard' long remains unintelligible to the hinterland communities, as seen in Table 1, and its tyranny hampers mass literacy programmes.

Many language experts have now started questioning the supremacy of the mother tongue medium stretched over the entire education carreer. Under various political pressures, it is now being conceded that the mother tongue cannot be the only language of education. The scope of mother tongue education and of imposing urban élite standards in 'school' language, therefore, needs to be reassessed in the light of recent insights gained from the studies of plural societies (Khubchandani 1974a).

3 Demands of active bilingualism in a plural society expose an individual to 'doing' language activity by accomplishing diverse communicative tasks through a variety of speech styles, registers, dialects, and even languages. The policy requiring every literate person to master two, three or four distinct normative systems—nurtured in historically or geographically unrelated 'traditions'—is likely to result in stifling the flexible and creative role of contact languages in a community and these contact languages may survive merely as 'world', 'national', or 'classical' library languages for reference purposes.

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An individual or a speech community responds to the verbal needs of heterogeneous situations spontaneously by the processes of convergence, assimilation, maintenance, and creativity, known in linguistic parlance as analogy, interference, pidginization, code-switching, etc. Skillful mastery over several sharply 'insulated' standard languages is a remarkable feat which only a few motivated professionals can be expected to achieve. The moves for language autonomy in education programmes have provided, rather, disincentives to the active bilingualism prevailing in many regions in South Asia.

Requirements of 'elegance' in education, apart from slowing down the pace of switch over from developed media to emerging media, also inhibit the introduction of literacy in an economical manner.[9] The common man has to be educated to use the language, quite unrelated to the facility in communication of the academic. So far, very little experimentation has been encouraged to test the validity of these assumptions for a complex plural society such as India.

The magnitude of various linguistic and education problems in newly-independent countries appears to be outside the experience of most European countries either in the past or in the present. In most of the Western homogenized nation-states, identification of the standard core and demarcation of boundaries of a mother tongue are no longer sources of tension. Textbook standards of different languages, drawn from respective literary traditions, were stabilized along with the continuing processes of urbanization. One does not find any apparent conflict between the stabilized standard and actual speech variations in a language area. By and large, a speech community's image of language, its identity postures through language, and actual use of language have acquired some congruity within a language territory. But the intricacies of language behaviour in the Indian context reveal apparent ambiguities in defining the concept of mother tongue itself. Mother tongue identity and its image do not necessarily claim congruity with actual usage, and these are again not rigidly identified with specific language territories (Khubchandani 1976).

Hence, similar to the British ambivalence in accepting the principle of universal education but directing their resources toward selective education, the present policies of the state governments also seem to be ambivalent as far as paying lip service to the 'narrow' definition of mother tongue but directing their attention and energies, along with their resources, to the development of mother tongues qualifying

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according to the 'broad' definition, i.e., regional languages, Hindi, and even to the promotion of English.

NOTES

[1] For a detailed account of the patterns of hierarchy in language loyalties in the Broad Hindustani Region, see Gumperz and Naim (1960), Khubchandani (1974a).

[2] The Collector of Bellary district (presently in Karnataka state) in 1823 reported that out of 533 schools in the district, 235 schools employed Camataca (Kannada), 226 Teloogoo (Telugu), 23 Maharatta (Marathi), 21 Persian, 4 Tamil, one English medium; besides, 23 schools were exclusively for Brahmins, teaching 'some of the Hindoo sciences, such as theology, astronomy, logic and law, still imperfectly taught in the Sanskrit language' (Sharp 1920: 65).

[3] Burton (1851: 134-57) gives an elaborate account of the multilingual pattern of education in Sindh before its conquest by the British in 1843. According to him, a Hindu child started learning with the Devanagari script from a Brahmin teacher for studying religious texts in Sindhi and also acquired rudiments of Sanskrit. He also learnt Gurmukhi characters to read the Granth—a sacred text of the Sikhs and Hindus in northern India. An Amil boy (belonging to the 'courtly' Hindu class) then moved to an Akhund (a Muslim or Hindu pedagogue under the *maktab* system) and was introduced to popular Persian poetry. A few studied Arabic also. The Amil boy is then taken to some *daftar* (secretariat) by a relation to be initiated in the mysteries of Arzi (petition writing in Persian), simple calculation, etc. (p. 149).

[4] Arguing the intrinsic superiority of the English language, Macaulay claimed with a pungent rhetoric: 'We have to educate a people who cannot at present be educated by means of their mother tongue. We must teach them some foreign language. The claims of our own language it is hardly necessary to recapitulate. It stands pre-eminent even among the languages of the West. ... What the Greek and Latin were to the contemporaries of More and Ascham, our tongue is to the people of India' (Sharp 1920: 110-11).

[5] Princep, who represented the Orientalists' view in administration, registering his protest to the Resolution calls it 'a rash act' and 'a declaration of the mischievous and injurious tendency'. Princep favoured the retention of the traditional education system. Document no. 34, quoted in Sharp (1920: 139).

[6] Roy in his petition (1823) to the Prime Minister William Pitt, citing the merits of the Baconian philosophy which displaced the system of classical schools, 'the best calculated to perpetuate ignorance', points out that: 'In the same manner Sangscrit [sic] system of education would be the best calculated to keep this country in darkness, if such had been the policy of the British Legislature.' Document no. 26, quoted in Sharp (1920: 98-101).

[7] Johnstone, the Political Agent of Nagaland (1873-74), opposed the adoption of the 'effeminate ways and religious characteristics of the Assamese (language)', and desired that Nagas should be instructed in English language and the Christian religion under the clergy of the Church of England. Quoted in Barpujari (1973: 24-30).

[*] Pleading for a self governing India along Western lines, Gokhale, the leader of the Moderates in the Congress Movement, argued: 'the quality of education assumes significance only after illiteracy is liquidated'. Quoted in Saiyidain, Naik, and Abid Husain (1952: 65).

[**] One finds the language question in every decennial census from 1881 to give rise to various doubts and misinterpretations in the minds of people of different regions, as well as to baffle the alien rulers. The Census Commissioner Gait, in his Report (1913: 320), remarks: '[In the United Provinces] simply because they refused to define their terms before they argued, or rather because they would not take the trouble to understand the terms as used by the census authorities, the controversialists, who were really quarrelling about the respective merits of certain styles as vehicles of instruction, succeeded in utterly falsifying a set of important statistics relating to something entirely different'.

[***] The Sindh government in 1852 set up a committee for recognizing a single script for Sindhi in the midst of diverse usage. Though the philologists like Stack and Trumpp agreed upon a modified version of Devanagari to suit the needs of the Sindhi language, the rulers, because of political considerations, ultimately decided in favour of a modified Perso-Arabic script. But still today the Sindhi migrants in India continue to be divided over the formal recognition of one or another script. This controversy, going on for over a century among the Sindhi elite, provides useful insights into the consequences of such monistic assertions (Khubchandani 1969a).

[1] The Official Language Commission (1956: 89) regarded education through a foreign medium as 'a wearisome burdening of the memory, a sacrifice of the faculty of independent thinking, and a blunting of intellect'.

[2] The Central Advisory Board of Education in its 1948 Annual Meeting had accepted the literary language of the region as the medium of education and made it quite clear that dialects were unacceptable as media of instruction (India 1960: 39-40).

[3] 'In well formalized speech groups, it is basically the result of explicit standardization process (through prestige group pressures and/or education) that allegiance to a particular mother tongue label, and to a particular set of "stereotypes" in speech is taken for granted by its members, e.g., "English" with the general acceptance of RP (Received Pronunciation) model by the British. Lack of standardization or of overtness of a particular trait leads to the fluidity in identifying abstract attributes, the selection of which is largely based on various prestige factors, reference group pressures and socio-political climate' (Khubchandani 1972).

[4] This view seems to have dominated in the post-Renaissance period in Europe as well, when language was claimed as a major criterion for stabilizing nationalistic states, e.g., French view of minority languages—Provencal (another Romance), Breton (a Celtic) and Basque (a non-Indo-European)—treating them as dialects of the dominant French (a Romance language).

[5] The University Education Commission (1949) and the Official Language Commission (1956) felt that 'the languages of the large advanced groups with a current literature, practice and tradition' were the only fit media of instruction (OLC: 27).

[6] The formula recommends the states to provide the teaching of the mother tongue, Hindi, and English for the non-Hindi population, and Hindi or any other Indian language, and English for the Hindi-speaking population.

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[14] Discussing the language problems of the Blacks and Spanish-Americans, Spolsky (1971: 1-5) points out the cases where 'language is used as an excuse like race or skin color or sex, for not hiring someone. No amount of language training will change this for the discrimination exists in the hearers and not in the speakers. . . . A child going to school must be taught the standard language if he is to have access to the general culture and the economy. At the same time, he has a right to be taught in his own language while he is learning enough English to handle the rest of the curriculum'.

[15] The British Indian Association of the North-Western Provinces in a 'memorial' (1867) urged the Government of India to create a 'Vernacular University' in which 'the arts, sciences, and other branches of literature may be taught through the instrumentality of the vernacular; and examination in the vernacular be annually held in those very subjects in which the student is now examined in English in the Calcutta University' (Document no. 6, Naik 1963: 21-28). The rulers, though conceding that the views of the memorialists were 'fundamentally sound', felt the proposal was 'too radical' (Document no. 7, ibid: 29-32).

[16] The state of affairs can be visualized from a report of the Directorate of Education in Nagaland (1971) stating that textbooks (even for primary education) are being 'originally written in English and then translated in local languages' as 'authors in the local languages are not available' (Sharma 1971).

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